

In the Specification

Amend the specification as follows:

Amend the paragraph beginning at page 7 line 22 as follows:

In describing the preferred embodiment of the present invention, reference will be made herein to Figs. 1 through 6 of the drawings in which like numerals refer to like features of the invention. Features of the invention are not necessarily shown to scale in the drawings.

Amend the paragraph beginning at page 14 line 14 as follows:

In its most basic form, the method includes projecting an energy beam through the target mask portion onto a first location of a substrate at a first focus setting, initially estimated to impart the best focus. As described previously, the target mask portion includes a plurality of spaced elements having essentially the same length and width and forming an array, with ends of the individual elements being aligned to form first and second opposing array edges, and the array elements having a predefined pitch comprising the sum of the element thickness and spacing. Preferably, the target includes a pair of the arrays, with one of the arrays being of a complementary, contrasting tone to the other of the arrays, as shown in Fig. 1. The process includes lithographically forming a first target on the substrate corresponding to the first focus setting. After lithographically exposing the target at the initial best focus position, the method then includes projecting an energy beam through the target mask portion onto a second location of the substrate at a second focus setting. The second target, corresponding to the second focus setting, is also lithographically formed on the substrate. Preferably, the method is continued to lithographically

expose a number of same or different targets at different focus settings. The focus settings are preferably at a plurality of similar offsets or increments, both positive and negative, above and below the initial estimated best focus setting. The developing and etching of the different targets focus offsets may be performed simultaneously. The method then measures a measurable dimension sensitive to defocus, e.g., the distance between array edges in Fig. 1, for various target focus offsets on the substrate with an optical metrology tool such that the individual array elements are not necessarily resolved on the substrate in the direction of the pitch. The widths and distances measured by the array edges may be any of those shown and described in connection with Fig. 1 to determine array widths of the target focus offsets. The different measured widths of the various target focus offsets are compared, and fed back to the lithography tool by a focus controller to determine a desired focus setting of the energy beam, based on the comparison of the widths of the first and second target.